

Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccine

Meningococcal (Groups A, C, Y and W-135) Conjugate Vaccine (MCV-4)

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Tom Kerr, B.S., R.N.
ISDH Communicable Disease

ACIP Recommends Meningococcal Vaccine for Adolescents and College Freshmen

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended that children ages 11-12 years and teens entering high school, as well as college freshman living in dormitories, receive a newly licensed meningococcal vaccine. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) licensed this vaccine on January 14, 2005, for use in people ages 11-55 years. It is manufactured by Sanofi Pasteur and is marketed as Menactra™.

Meningococcal disease is caused by bacteria that infect the bloodstream and the lining of the brain and the spinal cord, often causing serious illness. Every year in the United States, between 1,400 to 2,800 people acquire meningococcal disease. Ten to 14 percent of people with meningococcal disease die, and 11-19 percent of survivors have permanent disabilities, such as mental retardation, hearing loss, and loss of limbs.

The disease often begins with symptoms that can be mistaken for common illnesses, such as the flu. However, meningococcal disease is particularly dangerous because it progresses rapidly and can kill within hours.

“Meningococcus is a serious disease that kills about 300 people each year in the U.S. We are encouraged that today’s ACIP recommendation will help to prevent this potentially deadly disease among adolescents,” said Dr. Stephen Cochi, Acting Director of the National Immunization Program at CDC.

The ACIP has an existing recommendation for a routine doctor’s visit for children ages 11-12 years, at which they may receive a tetanus-diphtheria booster shot. With the new recommendation, these same children will also receive the meningococcal vaccine at this routine visit. In order to foster the most rapid reduction of meningococcal disease following this recommendation, the committee also recommended that during the next 2 to 3 years, teens entering high school also should be vaccinated. College freshman who live in dormitories are at higher risk of meningococcal disease than other college students and should also be vaccinated. Meningococcal vaccine may also be provided to college students who do not live in dormitories and adolescents who want to reduce their risk for meningococcal disease.

The vaccine is highly effective. However, it does not protect people against disease caused by “type B” meningococcal bacteria. This type of bacteria causes one-third of meningococcal cases. More than half of the cases among infants less than one year are caused by “type B,” for which no vaccine is licensed or available in the United States.

Source: http://www.cdc.gov/nip/vaccine/meningitis/mcv4/mcv4_acip.htm
